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High tech makes spying safer, ex-CIA chief says

By Linnet Myers

The spying business has been "revolutionized" by modern technology and a public that insists on knowing what its government is doing, Stansfield Turner, former director of the CIA, said here Sunday.

"Today you would never send in a spy at the risk of his life" if highly technical spying methods could be used instead, Turner told a symposium on "U.S. Politics and Foreign Policy" sponsored by the American Association of Healthcare Consultants and held at the Union League Club.

A spy's life was never as dangerous as James Bond's, he said. "No, I was never sequestered in a blinding snowstorm with a beautiful blond spy."

But spying has become even safer in the last decade through the increasing use of sophisticated bugging devices, high-flying spy planes and spy satellites, he said.

Perhaps an even more significant change in CIA operations came from recent requirements to disclose more to the public—a change that Turner sees as both good and bad.

Though it may sometimes risk a spy's security, it may have stopped the CIA from spying on Americans who are "perfectly innocent," he said. "It's easy, in the name of protecting your country, to get carried away."

He also said the "wild schemes" of the 1950s and 1960s often did the country no good anyway. For ex-



Stansfield Turner

ample, he said, the CIA kept a Russian defector, suspected of being a double agent, in an 8-by-8-foot room for more than three years.

He was interrogated repeatedly, sometimes with the use of drugs, but never admitted anything. "We virtually tortured this man for 3½ years," said Turner, author of the just-released book, "Secrecy and Democracy—The CIA in Transition." "You couldn't do that today."

Turner, head of the CIA from 1977 until 1980, also said the U.S. use of covert activities has been restricted by the public outcry of the 1960s and 1970s.